

27 January 2012

Army Public Health Weekly Update

The Army Public Health Update is a collection of articles taken verbatim from public sources to offer awareness of current health issues and the media coverage given to them. The articles do not necessarily represent US Army Medical Department opinions, views, policy, or guidance, and should not be construed or interpreted as being endorsed by the US Army Medical Department.

U.S. Army Public Health Command



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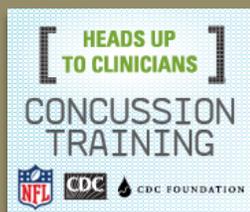
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The Armed Forces Public Health Conference for 2012 is Postponed.

All AFPHC registrants that reserved a hotel room (with their own travel credit card) in anticipation of the 2012 AFPHC should cancel their hotel room to ensure they are not charged a fee for non-cancellation.

"Heads Up" on Concussion

CDC has created two free online courses – one for health care professionals and another for youth and high school sports coaches, parents, and athletes – that provide important information on preventing, recognizing, and responding to a concussion.



WELLNESS

- Brown fat, triggered by cold or exercise, may yield a key to weight control
- Health benefits of exercise may depend on cellular degradation
- Only 1 in 4 young teens uses sunscreen regularly, study finds
- Pain intensity greater for women than men, study finds
- Study shows how stress triggers immune system

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- South Sudan: Malaria and whooping cough kill 36 in Jonglei's Duk County
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- HHS issues medical surge guidance for healthcare systems
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- U.S.: Cancer screening, 2010

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- Chile: Arsenic cancer risk still high decades later in Chile region

U.S. MILITARY

Births, active component, U.S. Armed Forces, 2001-2010

December 2011 - In the general U.S. population, birth rates have been fairly stable during the past 10 years. As a result of delayed childbearing, birth rates among women in their 30s and 40s have been increasing while birth rates in younger women have been decreasing.¹ Among U.S. service members, the fertility rate (the average number of births per woman) differs by service branch due to the different age compositions of the services and perhaps

Classified Version of the Weekly Update

An Army Public Health Weekly Update is available with articles classified up to the **SECRET** level from the USAPHC SIPRNet site:

<http://phc.army.smil.mil>

Look under Hot Topics & Current Issues.

To access this version, you will need a **SECRET** clearance and a SIPRNet account.

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different deployment experiences. This report summarizes trends in births by age and service among active component females during the past 10 years. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

Thinking underwear for warriors

19 January - Just don't call them Underoos. Technically known as a "wear and forget physiological sensing system," thinking undergarments may be the next-generation drawers for the modern warfighter. Gel-free sensors form an electronic network in the fabric to monitor respiration and heart rate, activity, body posture and skin temperature -- relaying that data through the warfighters' layers of clothing to a central system. The technology could provide an unprecedented capability not just to monitor warfighters during combat and identify critical casualties but also to train and select for missions. The U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command office (USAMRMC) and the Telemedicine & Advanced Technology Research Center (TATRC) have been working with Foster-Miller and Malden Mills Industries to create the new low-cost knitted undergarments. [Discovery News](#)

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GLOBAL

Anti-malaria drug synthesized with the help of oxygen and light

17 January - The most effective anti-malaria drug can now be produced inexpensively and in large quantities. This means that it will be possible to provide medication for the 225 million malaria patients in developing countries at an affordable price. Researchers at the Max Planck Institute of Colloids and Interfaces in Potsdam and the Freie Universität Berlin have developed a very simple process for the synthesis of artemisinin, the active ingredient that pharmaceutical companies could only obtain from plants up to now. The chemists use a waste product from current artemisinin production as their starting substance. This substance can also be produced biotechnologically in yeast, which the scientists convert into the active ingredient using a simple yet very ingenious method. [Physorg.com](#)

CDC develops new enterovirus 71 screening reagent

17 January - The Centers for Disease Control has developed a new enterovirus 71 (EV71) screening reagent that can detect the virus from a drop of blood in 30 minutes, health officials said Wednesday. The new test is far more efficient than traditional screening methods because the blood sample does not have to be sent to an outside laboratory to get a result, said Wu Ho-sheng, director of the CDC's Research and Diagnostic Center... Though it may be quick, the test is still only 70 percent accurate and cannot be done until a person has had a fever for 2-3 days, Wu said. [Focus Taiwan](#)

Climate change and farming: How not to go hungry in a warmer world



24 January - Climate change might hit us in the most vital place of all — the dinner plate. Why do we care about climate change? Obviously we worry about what warming temperatures might do to the geography of the planet — particularly melting polar ice and raising global sea levels. We fear the impact that climate change could have on endangered species, as warming temperatures speed the already rapid pace of extinction for wildlife that have been pushed to the edge by habitat loss and hunting. We focus on the changing risk of extreme weather, of more powerful storms causing billions of dollars of damage in richer nations — and taking thousands of lives in poorer ones. Sometimes we're simply uneasy with idea that our actions are altering the Earth, changing the rhythms of the seasons, shifting weather patterns we've been accustomed to for as long as human beings can remember. All of that is important — but not as important as the impact that climate change might have on the most vital function of any species: feeding itself. [TIME](#)

Common scans could hurt thyroid, researchers say

24 January - The iodide dye used in heart scans and other medical imaging might damage some people's thyroid glands, which could cause important health problems later on, researchers say. In a new study, they found patients who had signs of thyroid disease were between two and three times as likely to have had a scan using iodide as a comparison group of people without thyroid problems. The findings aren't ironclad proof that the dye itself is responsible, but experts agree that's a likely explanation since high doses of iodide are known to throw the thyroid off balance. And the amounts typically given during a scan may be several hundred times greater than the recommended daily intake of 150 micrograms. [Reuters](#)

First hints that stem cells can help patients get better

23 January - Two women losing their sight to progressive forms of blindness may have regained some vision while participating in an experiment testing a treatment made from human embryonic stem cells, researchers reported today. The report marks the first time that scientists have produced direct evidence that human embryonic stem cells may have helped a patient. The cells had only previously been tested in the laboratory or in animals. "I can't tell you how excited I am about this," said [Steven D. Schwartz](#), a professor of ophthalmology at UCLA's Jules Stein Eye Institute leading the research. "For these patients, the impact is enormous." [NPR](#)

NGO warns of effects of AIDS funding shortfall

20 January - The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria is celebrating its 10th Anniversary. The fund says it has saved more than 7 and a half million lives by supporting prevention and treatment programs. However, in November, it announced it had cancelled

its next funding round and that no new grants would be approved until 2014. An NGO is warning of the consequences if donors don't step forward. The global fund began collecting donations from governments and private foundations in January 2002. Since then, it has approved over \$22 billion dollars for hundreds of programs in more than 150 countries. About 50 countries have contributed. The United States has been the biggest donor, providing 33-percent of the funds pledged each year. In 2010, it pledged more than one billion dollars. However, when the fund's board met in Accra, Ghana, in November, officials decided to cancel the next funding round, round 11. Along with the global economic crisis came a sharp drop in donations. Officials now say most of the more than \$8 billion in donations expected to arrive by the end of 2013 will be needed to renew existing grants. That leaves no money for round 11. [VOA](#)

Untreatable new forms of TB raising alarm

24 January - In the world of tuberculosis (TB) control, it is the worst-case scenario. Doctors in Mumbai, India, reported last month they are seeing a group of patients infected with what they called "totally drug-resistant" tuberculosis. Indian health officials are still investigating those cases, but untreatable strains of the bacterial respiratory disease have turned up before: in 15 patients in Iran in 2009 and in two patients in Italy in 2007. Public health experts responding and there is new hope some for new weapons against a disease that is killing 5,000 people every day. The World Health Organization (WHO) lists 69 countries that have reported what is officially called "extensively drug-resistant" tuberculosis (XDR-TB). It's a form of the mycobacterium that, like the one reported in India, isn't killed by first- and second-line anti-TB injectable drugs. The WHO says at least 25,000 cases of XDR-TB are reported worldwide every year. Dr. Margaret Chan, WHO's director-general, views the emergence of drug-resistant tuberculosis with alarm. [VOA](#)

WHO says 40% of population at risk for dengue fever

24 January - The World Health Organization (WHO) sounded a new warning today about the spread of dengue fever, saying cases have increased sharply since 2008 and more than 40% of the world's population is at risk for infection. Official reports show that cases in the Americas, Southeast Asia, and the western Pacific exceeded 2.2 million in 2010, compared with just 1.2 million in 2008, the agency said. The Americas alone had 1.6 million cases in 2010. That included 49,000 cases of severe dengue, also known as dengue hemorrhagic fever, the WHO said. The agency estimates the global total of dengue cases at 50 million to 100 million, with most of them going unreported. An estimated 500,000 people worldwide, many of them children, are hospitalized with severe dengue each year. "Today, severe dengue affects most Asian and Latin American countries and has become a leading cause of hospitalization and death among children in these regions," the statement said. It called dengue "a major international health concern." [CIDRAP News](#)

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INFLUENZA

Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center: DoD Influenza Surveillance Summary

25 January 2012:

- Influenza-like illness (ILI) incidence rates continued to decrease within the MHS and influenza activity remains low across all overseas DoD laboratory surveillance networks.
- The influenza vaccination rate for the DoD (Active Duty component only) is 94%. [AFHSC DoD Influenza Surveillance Summary](#)

CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

During week 2 (8-14 January 2012), influenza activity in the United States remained relatively low. [FluView](#)

European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview

During week 2 (9-15 January 2012), low influenza activity was notified by 25 of the 27 countries reporting, (Italy and Spain reported medium activity) with five countries reporting local or regional spread. This week ten countries reported increasing trends compared with five last week. [Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview](#)

Generation X: How young adults deal with influenza

24 January - Only about one in five young adults in their late 30s received a flu shot during the 2009-2010 swine flu epidemic, according to a University of Michigan report that details the behavior and attitudes of Generation X. But about 65 percent were at least moderately concerned about the flu, and nearly 60 percent said they were following the issue very or moderately closely. Using survey data collected from approximately 3,000 young adults during the 2009-2010 H1N1 influenza epidemic—the first serious infectious disease this group had ever experienced—The Generation X Report explores how Americans ages 36-39 kept abreast of the issue and what actions they eventually took to protect themselves and their families. "These results suggest that young adults in Generation X did reasonably well in their first encounter with a major epidemic," said Jon D. Miller, author of The Generation X Report. "Those with minor children at home were at the greatest risk, and they responded accordingly, with higher levels of awareness and concern." [EurekaAlert](#)

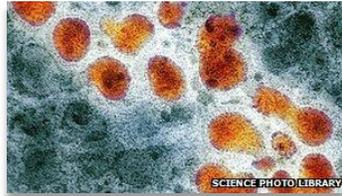
USAPHC: U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report

21 January – The 2011-2012 data continue to show a lower burden of respiratory disease than in 2010-2011. Of 140 specimens submitted for week three of 2012, 4% were positive for influenza A. Thirty-seven influenza cases have been reported in DRSI through week three of the 2011-2012 season. Ten cases of influenza among Army beneficiaries have been

hospitalized during this influenza season; there have been no fatalities. ILI activity within ESSENCE indicates both AD and beneficiary visits were lower this year than last year at this time. [USAPHC U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report](#)

PANDEMIC AND AVIAN INFLUENZA

Bioterror fears halt research on mutant bird flu



20 January - Scientists who created a potentially more deadly bird flu strain have temporarily stopped their research amid fears it could be used by terrorists. In a letter published in *Science and Nature*, the teams call for an "international forum" to debate the risks and value of the studies. US authorities last month asked the authors of the research to redact key details in forthcoming publications. A government advisory panel suggested the data could be used by terrorists. Biosecurity experts fear an altered, more contagious form of the virus could spark a pandemic deadlier than the 1918-19 Spanish flu outbreak that killed up to 40 million people. The National Science Advisory Board for Biosecurity (NSABB) recommended key details be omitted from publication of the research, which sparked international furor. "I would have preferred if this hadn't caused so much controversy, but it has happened and we can't change that," Ron Fouchier, a researcher from Erasmus Medical Center in Rotterdam, told *Science Insider*. [BBC News](#)

China: Avian influenza situation, WHO update

24 January - The Ministry of Health of China has notified WHO of a human case of avian influenza A (H5N1) virus infection. The case is a 39 year-old male from Guiyan City, Guizhou Province. He developed symptoms on 6 January 2012 and was admitted to hospital but was in critical condition and died on 22 January 2012. The case was laboratory diagnosed by Guizhou CDC and confirmed by China CDC on 22 January 2012. Investigation into the source of infection is ongoing. Close contacts of the case are being monitored and to date all remain well. [WHO](#)

Viet Nam: Avian influenza situation, WHO

20 January - The Ministry of Health (MoH) has announced a confirmed case of human infection with avian influenza A (H5N1) virus. The case was an 18 year-old male from Kien Giang Province. He developed symptoms on 10 January 2012 and was admitted to hospital on 14 January 2012 but died on 16 January 2012. Confirmatory test results for influenza A (H5N1) were obtained on 17 January 2012 by Pasteur Institute, the WHO National Influenza Centre in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam. The man was reportedly exposed to ducks. Pasteur Institute in Ho Chi Minh City and the local health sector are conducting outbreak investigation and response. He is the 120th person in Viet Nam to become infected with the H5N1 virus; to date, 60 of these cases have died from complications of the disease. [WHO](#)

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Germany: Schmallenberg virus update

24 January - According to the Ministry of Environment SBV has been confirmed in the fetus of a bison and its dam from the northern Rhineland-Palatinate area, the country's 1st confirmed evidence of the so-called Schmallenberg virus. A total of 5 lambs are under investigation as the virus is suspected. The preliminary positive findings by the State Health Office were sent for confirmation to the Friedrich-Loeffler-Institute on the Island of Riems. "Final results are expected by the end of the week," said Minister Ulrike Hofken. Harmless to humans, the pathogen causes abortions in sheep, cattle and goats as well as abnormalities in lambs and calves. The virus is transmitted by mosquitoes [in fact, midges are regarded the predominant vector. - Mod.AS]. "We will monitor the situation very closely and implement the necessary measures cooperatively with the State Veterinary Laboratory and the District Veterinary authorities." There is no vaccine as yet. The federal government intends to introduce mandatory reporting of this disease, to monitor the spread of infection. The Ministry of Environment of Rhineland-Palatinate will implement mandatory reporting for the Land shortly. [ProMED-mail](#)

Several countries allow fungicide found in U.S. orange

23 January - U.S. regulators may ban orange juice shipments from Brazil after finding a fungicide prohibited in the United States, which sent orange juice futures to an all-time high on Monday. Here are some facts about this fungicide, which is illegal for citrus in the United States but used in other countries for crops infected with fungal diseases, such as mold, mildew and rot. WHICH COUNTRIES ALLOW IT? * In the United States, carbendazim is approved as a fungicide in paints, adhesives, textiles and ornamental trees. It is not approved for food products. However, another fungicide that is used on food products, thiophanate-methyl, breaks down into carbendazim after application. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) thus allows small amounts of carbendazim on 31 kinds of food, including grains, nuts and some fruits like strawberries -- but not on citrus. The EPA said it approved carbendazim for citrus in Florida from 2002 to 2008 to fight black spot, a type of mold that grows on orange trees. But after that period, other alternatives became available and carbendazim was taken off the market. A company must apply to the EPA for permission to have small amounts of carbendazim on citrus, but the EPA said no one has done so. Without official approval, any detectable amount of carbendazim on citrus is illegal. [Reuters](#)

Supreme Court overturns California slaughterhouse regulations on downer pigs

23 January - The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that a federal slaughterhouse statute pre-empts a California law barring the sale of meat from downer pigs... California requires immediate euthanization of "nonambulatory" pigs and bars their slaughter. Federal law, on the other hand, puts downer swine into a category of "suspect" animals that must be set

apart, monitored and slaughtered separately. A federal inspector then determines whether the meat can be sold. "The FMIA regulates slaughterhouses' handling and treatment of nonambulatory pigs from the moment of their delivery through the end of the meat production process," Kagan wrote. "California's [law] endeavors to regulate the same thing, at the same time, in the same place—except by imposing different requirements. The FMIA expressly pre-empts such a state law." [ABA Journal](#)

United Kingdom: Lyme disease risk from dogs 'higher than thought'

24 January - Ticks that can transmit Lyme disease may be more prevalent in the UK than realised, say researchers who have found out how many dogs harbour them. Experts have suspected for some time that the UK has a growing problem with these tiny pests - rates of the disease have been creeping up in recent years. In 2010 there were 953 reported cases in England and Wales. Now, after doing random checks on over 3,500 dogs, Bristol University experts suspects the problem is even bigger. Of the 3,534 pet dogs inspected at veterinary clinics in the UK between March and October 2009, 14.9% had ticks. "Without considerably better surveillance and routine diagnostic testing, Lyme disease is only likely to become more prevalent." Of these, 2.3% turned out to be infected. The expected prevalence of infected ticks on dogs is 0.5% or 481 infected ticks per 100,000 dogs. This suggests that the prevalence of this *Borrelia* infection in the UK tick population is considerably higher than previously thought, the researchers report in the journal *Comparative Immunology, Microbiology and Infectious Diseases*. [BBC News](#)

U.S. appeals WTO ruling on dolphin-safe tuna label

20 January - The United States said on Friday it was appealing a World Trade Organization ruling against U.S. dolphin-safe labeling measures for tuna in a longrunning spat with Mexico closely watched by environmentalists. "Our dolphin-safe labeling measures for tuna products provide information for American consumers as they make food purchasing decisions for their families," said Andrea Mead, a spokeswoman for the U.S. Trade Representative. "Our decision to appeal the WTO ruling in this case demonstrates the commitment of the United States to our dolphin-safe labeling measures," Mead said in a statement. Under the United States' dolphin-safe labeling provisions, producers of tuna products - whether foreign or domestic - have the option of labeling tuna products that meet the standards of the U.S. provisions as dolphin safe, USTR said. One such condition, challenged by Mexico, is that the label cannot be used if dolphins are purposefully chased and encircled in order to catch tuna. Some Mexican fishing vessels use this method when fishing for tuna. [Reuters](#)

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Brown fat, triggered by cold or exercise, may yield a key to weight control

24 January - Fat people have less than thin people. Older people have less than younger people. Men have less than younger women. It is brown fat, actually brown in color, and its great appeal is that it burns calories like a furnace. A new study finds that one form of it, which is turned on when people get cold, sucks fat out of the rest of the body to fuel itself. Another new study finds that a second form of brown fat can be created from ordinary white fat by exercise. Of course, researchers say, they are not blind to the implications of their work. If they could turn on brown fat in people without putting them in cold rooms or making them exercise night and day, they might have a terrific weight loss treatment. And companies are getting to work. But Dr. André Carpentier, an endocrinologist at the University of Sherbrooke in Quebec and lead author of one of the new papers, notes that much work lies ahead. It is entirely possible, for example, that people would be hungrier and eat more to make up for the calories their brown fat burns. [The New York Times](#)

Health benefits of exercise may depend on cellular degradation

20 January - The health benefits of exercise on blood sugar metabolism may come from the body's ability to devour itself, UT Southwestern Medical Center researchers report in the journal *Nature*. Autophagy is a process by which a cell responds to starvation and other stresses by degrading damaged or unneeded parts of itself to produce energy. It is sometimes called the cell's housekeeping pathway... Dr. Levine, a Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) investigator at the medical center, decided to focus on one specific health effect of exercise – the ability of exercise to prevent blood sugar abnormalities in the face of a high-fat diet. Her mouse study provides the first evidence that exercise stimulates autophagy. [EurekAlert](#)

Only 1 in 4 young teens uses sunscreen regularly, study finds

23 January - Despite the fact that sunburn in childhood greatly raises a person's lifelong risk for skin cancer, just 25 percent of 14-year-olds in a new U.S. study said they used sunscreen regularly. What's more, behaviors linked to risky sun exposure increased as kids got older, with older teens reporting more time in the sun and less use of sunscreen than when they were young. In the study, published in the February issue of *Pediatrics*, researchers led by Dr. Stephen Dusza of Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, in New York City, examined data on 360 fifth graders in Massachusetts who were surveyed in 2004 and again three years later in 2007. Looking at changes in sun-protective behaviors over that period of time, the team found that more than half (53 percent) of the youngsters had already suffered at least one sunburn by the age of 11 and that that rate of sunburn remained constant over the next three years. But during that same time period, rates of using sunscreen "often or

always" actually dropped: While half of the kids used such products at the beginning of the study, only 25 percent still did so three years later. The authors noted that the proportion of children who admitted to "liking a tan and spending time outside to get a tan significantly increased" as they grew older, as well. [Medline Plus](#)

Pain intensity greater for women than men, study finds

23 January - According to the results of a study in which researchers examined pain scores from tens of thousands of patients in the United States, women experience more intense pain than men. The findings, published in the Jan. 23 issue of the *Journal of Pain*, suggest that greater effort is needed to recruit women into studies in order to determine the reasons for this gender difference, the Stanford University School of Medicine investigators said. [Medline Plus](#)

Study shows how stress triggers immune system



23 January - Shedding some light on why stress might be bad for you, a new study finds that parts of your immune system ramp up when you get into personal conflicts with others. It's not clear how this effect of stress may make you sick, but the activated parts of the immune system -- which cause inflammation in the body -- have been linked to conditions such as diabetes and cancer. "The message is that the flotsam and jetsam of life predict changes in your underlying biology in ways that cumulatively could have a bad effect on health," said study co-author Shelley Taylor, a professor of psychology at the University of California, Los Angeles. "What this tells me is that people should be investing in socially supportive relationships, and they should not court relationships that lead to a great deal of conflict." [Medline Plus](#)

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USAFRICOM

Cote d'Ivoire: Public health risk as taps run dry

19 January - A severe shortage of clean drinking water in parts of Côte d'Ivoire is reaching critical levels and threatening public health, say residents and officials. "Today... uncontrolled urbanization is one the main causes of water scarcity... The continued decline in the quality of groundwater reserves will increase the risk of it being polluted. For now, we cannot use this water for public use. This means we will experience severe water shortages, especially in the economic capital [Abidjan] if nothing is done to tackle the problem. The difficulties we face now are small compared to what lies ahead," warned Marius Kouassi Aka, a water science researcher at the University of Abidjan. Rapidly growing demand for water in Abidjan - partly as a result of the influx of people into the city during the civil war - has stretched water supplies: "The district of Abidjan has only a dozen wells. The technical facilities are overwhelmed," said Hilary Kinimo, SODECI (state water company) regional director for Abidjan North, adding that three new boreholes were due to be completed in

June. SODECI said the problems in the north of the country were due to poor maintenance of water supply systems resulting from years of political strife. In the northern town of Dabakala taps have been dry for 12 days, obliging residents to seek unsafe alternatives. [All Africa](#)

Ethiopia ex Somalia: Poliomyelitis, suspected

25 January - The United Nations refugee agency [UNHCR] today [24 Jan 2012] voiced its concern over reports of 2 suspected polio cases this week among Somali refugees living in camps in Ethiopia and 3 cases in the surrounding community. "The immediate priority is to confirm the outbreak, and samples have been collected and sent to Addis Ababa for laboratory confirmation," said spokesperson for the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Melissa Fleming at a press briefing in Geneva. [ProMED-mail](#)

Mozambique: Simultaneous storms leave 25 dead

25 January - Two tropical storms in quick succession in Mozambique in recent days have left at least 25 dead, tens of thousands affected by flooding, and communications infrastructure damaged. Tropical depression Dando, which made landfall on 16 January north of the capital Maputo, was the fiercest tropical storm to strike the area since Storm Domoina in 1984. A few days later Cyclone Funso veered from an expected landfall in the north of the country and headed back into the Mozambique Channel, but the effects of the weather system were still felt. Dulce Chilungo, Mozambique's director of the Technical Council for Disaster Management, told a press briefing in Maputo on 25 January that 16 people had died in Zambézia and nine in Gaza Province. Dando has washed away about 60 metres of the main north-south road about 100km north of Maputo, where wind speeds of up to 70km/h and heavy rainfall led to flooding and damage to houses and schools, says a draft report by the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies obtained by IRIN. [IRIN](#)

South Sudan: Building a blood bank

25 January - A small fridge in the corner of Juba Teaching Hospital's laboratory is the only blood bank in South Sudan, the world's newest nation with some of the worst health statistics in the world. Health workers say a lack of blood is the main cause of mortality at the country's main but extremely under-resourced hospital, and they face the anguish of having to watch patients who could be saved die. "Sometimes they bleed until they die and we cannot do anything about it," said Wani Mena, head of the hospital. "The first cause, the major cause, of maternal mortality in our department is bleeding," said Chuol Kuma, an obstetrics and gynaecology consultant. While the rest of the hospital is sometimes left for days without power due to frequent cuts, capacity to keep more blood is hampered by only having a small fridge in the laboratory - the only room with a back-up generator. "The blood bank we have is a very small refrigerator. It only takes around 50 units of blood. This is not enough," Kuma said. [IRIN](#)

South Sudan: Malaria and whooping cough kill 36 in Jonglei's Duk County

21 January - A malaria and whooping cough outbreak in Jonglei State's Duk County, has reportedly killed 36 people over the last month with a further 761 cases under medical care in Pajut clinic. The head of the health centre in Pajut village, Gai Tut, on Saturday told Sudan Tribune that 14 people have died of malaria and over 400 other people of various ages have been affected over the last four weeks. According to Tut, their clinics started receiving malaria and whooping cough cases in their numbers over last few days. He says some patients were lost due to lack of drugs. [Sudan Tribune](#)

Swaziland: No money, no CD4 tests

23 January - Swaziland is still short of lab reagents needed for CD4 count testing, which is used to initiate and monitor patients on antiretroviral treatment, and HIV-positive people are growing increasingly frustrated as the country enters its fourth month without a way to establish the strength of their immune system. "This is setting us back years in the way we treat people living with HIV and AIDS. Government says it has no money to buy the chemicals needed to determine CD4 counts," Thembi Nkambule, director of the Swaziland Network of People Living with HIV and AIDS (SWANEPHA), an umbrella organization for the country's HIV and AIDS support groups, told News. Deciding on when to start a patient on ARV drugs is usually based on a combination of CD4 cell count test results and HIV disease progression, which the World Health Organization (WHO) has defined according to four clinical stages, with stage four being AIDS. In addition, guidelines for managing patients on ARV therapy also use CD4 count testing to measure the impact of the medication on the patient's health. The government's ongoing financial crisis again hit the health sector in October 2011 when supplies of lab reagents - the chemicals needed to operate the CD4 count apparatus - began drying up. Since December, CD4 count testing has virtually ground to a halt in Swaziland, which has the world's highest HIV prevalence. [All Africa](#)

Zimbabwe: Typhoid cases rise to 756

26 January – The number of typhoid cases treated in Harare has risen to 756 amid complaints by Kuwadzana residents that fish vendors are now trading at night. Residents interviewed yesterday said policing of vending activities was only during the day and fish vendors were taking advantage of darkness to trade. Harare City Council director of health services Dr Prosper Chonzi, has confirmed that samples taken from fish, raw and cooked meat tested positive for Salmonella typhi, the bacteria that causes typhoid. Dr Chonzi said the city was tracking patients who were treated at other health centres to establish their contacts and also test them for typhoid. "We are now overwhelmed. We are now seeking partners to help us," he said. [AllAfrica](#)

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Pakistan: Contaminated medicines kill at least 27

24 January - The government in Pakistan's Punjab province is scrambling to recall contaminated drugs that have killed at least 27 people over the last month, provincial health officials said Tuesday. Thousands of doses of the faulty medicines were freely provided to patients with heart problems at the government-run Punjab Institute of Cardiology in the eastern city of Lahore. "We are trying to retrieve all the medicines given out at this hospital," said Jehanzeb Khan, the Punjab health secretary. Thousands of prescriptions were handed out at the facility in the last month, hospital officials said. Investigators suspect bits of metal in the pills are responsible for the symptoms, which include heavy bleeding. Over 100 people have been admitted to hospitals in Lahore because of symptoms caused by the faulty medicines. [Reuters](#)

Pakistan: Malnutrition undermining battle against polio



23 January - A sense of despondency, perhaps even desperation, has been encountered in official Pakistan health circles as 192 cases of polio were reported in 2011, according to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, despite the launch of a National Emergency Action Plan for Polio Eradication at the start of the year. The plan was launched after 144 cases were recorded in 2010 - the highest in any nation in the world. The president announced at the time that the purpose was to make the nation "polio free". The initiative, however, has not been successful, with more incidents of polio reported, and a complete failure to match the success of neighbouring countries such as India, which this month completed its first 12-month period without a single case of polio. The national coordinator of the prime minister's Polio Eradication and Monitoring Cell, Altaf Bosan, told IRIN from Islamabad that while the programme was an "extensive and elaborate one", the poor figures showing up were a result of "refusals by households" to have children vaccinated, mainly due to a lack of awareness. Chairing a meeting in November on polio eradication, as it became clear that the figures for 2011 would be higher than for 2010, the prime minister said officials failing to deliver should be "sacked rather than transferred". [IRIN](#)

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United Kingdom: Experts review vitamin D advice

24 January - The chief medical officer for England, Dame Sally Davies, is to contact medical staff about concerns young children and some adults are not getting enough vitamin D. Government guidelines recommend some groups, including the under-fives, should take a daily supplement. However, recent research found that many parents and health

professionals were unaware of the advice. There has been an increase in childhood rickets over the past 15 years. According to Dr Benjamin Jacobs, from the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital, links to heart disease and some cancers are also being investigated. The consultant paediatrician told BBC Breakfast that the hospital saw about one severe case a month of rickets - softening of bones through lack of vitamin D in childhood. [BBC News](#)

United Kingdom: Heart attack deaths halved in less than 10 years

26 January - The number of deaths in the UK that are the result of heart attacks have halved in almost a decade, researchers have discovered. A review of NHS data revealed that between 2002 and 2010 the number of men who died after a heart attack was reduced by 50 percent, while the figure for women fell by 53 percent. Experts believe this is the result of improved aftercare for heart attack patients along with efforts to encourage people to stop smoking, reduce cholesterol and control high blood pressure. [Health Care Global](#)

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USNORTHCOM

HHS issues medical surge guidance for healthcare systems

25 January – The US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) recently released a new planning tool to help hospitals and health systems prepare for medical surges that could result from a bioterror attack, natural disaster, or other public health emergency... The HHS said it released the guidance to help hospitals, health systems, and their public health partners prepare for disasters, as well as to introduce a new Hospital Preparedness Program and Public Health Emergency Preparedness cooperative agreement that takes effect in July. [CIDRAP](#)

U.S.: California cuts whooping cough deaths to zero

24 January - For the first time in two decades, no one in California died from whooping cough last year, a public health victory that followed the deaths of 10 babies in 2010. The state also cut the total number of whooping cough cases by two-thirds, from a high of nearly 9,000 in 2010 to less than 3,000 in 2011, officials announced Tuesday. Dr. Gil Chavez, the California Department of Public Health epidemiologist and deputy director for infectious diseases, credited wider availability of vaccines, faster diagnosis, greater awareness and a new law that required pertussis booster shots for middle- and high-school kids. "Looking at our data, we really identified that there were some gaps in the rates of vaccination of critical populations," Chavez said. The push depended on the cooperation of local health departments and health care providers working together to emphasize the need for vaccination against the infection. Pertussis is a highly contagious bacterial illness

spread by coughs and sneezes. Efforts were targeted particularly toward families, caregivers and health care providers of babies younger than 6 months. Because they can't be fully immunized until after that age, it's important that everyone around the infants be protected against the disease, a process known as "cocooning," health experts say. [MSNBC](#)

U.S.: Cancer screening, 2010

27 January - ... Data from the 2010 NHIS were analyzed to assess use of the recommended tests by age, race, ethnicity, education, length of U.S. residence, and source and financing of health care to identify groups not receiving the full benefits of screening and to target specific interventions to increase screening rates. Overall, the breast cancer screening rate was 72.4% (below the Healthy People 2020 target of 81.1%), cervical cancer screening was 83.0% (below the target of 93.0%), and colorectal cancer screening was 58.6% (below the target of 70.5%). Screening rates for all three cancer screening tests were significantly lower among Asians than among whites and blacks. Hispanics were less likely to be screened for cervical and colorectal cancer. Higher screening rates were positively associated with education, availability and use of health care, and length of U.S. residence. Continued monitoring of screening rates helps to assess progress toward meeting *Healthy People 2020* targets and to develop strategies to reach those targets. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

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USPACOM

Myanmar: Drug-resistant malaria virus in GMS

24 January - Myanmar has warned against drug-resistant malaria virus which was first found in border areas of Thailand and Cambodia and later in some regions of the Greater Mekong Subregion basin, especially in border regions linked with eastern areas of Myanmar, according to Tuesday's official media. "If the situation gets worse, it would heavily deter the progress of anti-malaria campaign worldwide," Myanmar Health Minister Dr Pe Thet Khin was quoted by the New Light of Myanmar as saying. "The ultimate goal of Artemisinin Resistance Containment Plan is to prevent the spread of artemisinin resistance not only in Myanmar but also to countries sharing border with it, at least to hinder the spread of artemisinin resistance significantly," he told a related symposium in Nay Pyi Taw Monday.

[Xinhua](#)

Papua New Guinea: Rescue effort for landslide survivors continues



25 January - Rescue efforts are continuing in Papua New Guinea's (PNG) gas-rich Hela Province, a day after what officials have described as one of the Pacific nation's worst landslides ever. "At this point, relief efforts are ongoing," Martin Mose, head of PNG's National Disaster Centre (NDC), told IRIN in Port Moresby on 25 January, describing the situation on the ground as "fluid". Characterized by high terrain and

precipitous slopes, the remote region in the Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea is home to a controversial multi-billion dollar liquefied natural gas (LNG) project. However, no direct link has been established between the landslide and the operational activities of the ExxonMobil project. Dozens of people are feared dead, with local rescuers estimating many are still buried under the debris, after the landslide in Komo Maggarima District struck in the early hours of 24 January, catching many residents off guard. [IRIN](#)

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USSOUTHCOM

Chile: Arsenic cancer risk still high decades later in Chile region

24 January - People exposed to very high levels of arsenic in Chilean drinking water back in the 1950s and 60s are still showing a higher-than-normal risk of bladder cancer -- years after the arsenic problem was brought under control, a new study shows. The findings are not surprising, researchers say, since the cancer would take decades to emerge. But the results underscore the importance of continuing to screen high-risk people for bladder cancer, according to lead researcher Dr. Fernando Coz, a professor of urology at the Universidad de Los Andes in Santiago de Chile. The study, reported in the Journal of Urology, focused on people in the Antofagasta region of Chile. In the 1950s and 60s, drinking water in the region became contaminated with high levels of arsenic. [Reuters](#)

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